

TOP SECRET

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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6 December 1979

ALERT MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Security Council

SUBJECT : Thai-Kampuchean Border

The Vietnamese are placing Thailand under intense pressure to accept their consolidation of control in Kampuchea. This pressure will increase as the Vietnamese escalate operations to eliminate resistance in the border areas of western and northern Kampuchea. The Thai Government would doubtless turn to the United States for support, possibly invoking the Manila Pact. China may appear another avenue of recourse. If, in the Thai view, neither US nor Chinese support is sufficient, they may feel impelled to seek an accommodation with Vietnam. [REDACTED]

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Top Secret

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

6 December 1979

ALERT MEMORANDUM\*

Thai-Kampuchean Border

*A combination of factors could lead to rapid deterioration of the situation along the Thai-Kampuchean border. When Vietnam exerts even greater military pressure against the anti-Vietnamese resistance in Kampuchea--as it plans to do later this month--fighting could occur across the Thai-Kampuchean border to such an extent that the Thai armed forces would be unable to cope. In addition, the government could be faced with an intolerable refugee burden and increased political criticism. Should the Thai see their security imperiled by Vietnamese military operations, they would doubtless appeal for US aid, possibly under the terms of the Manila Pact. Thailand would probably also seek increased Chinese military pressure on Vietnam. If, in the Thai view, neither US nor Chinese support is sufficient, they might feel impelled to seek some accommodation with Vietnam.*

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*\*The Alert Memorandum is an interagency publication issued by the Director of Central Intelligence on behalf of the Intelligence Community. Its purpose is to ensure that senior policymakers are aware of the serious implications for US interests of impending potential developments. It is not a prediction that these developments will occur. This memorandum has been coordinated by CIA, DIA, NSA, State/INR, and the Strategic Warning Staff.*

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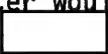
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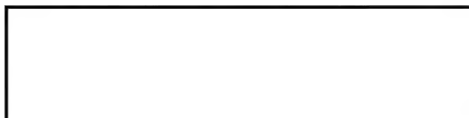
If, by accident or design, a significant engagement occurred between Thai and Vietnamese forces, and the former did not acquit themselves well, the situation would take on an even graver character. A major Thai defeat could constitute sufficient reason for China to teach Vietnam a second lesson; this, in turn, could invite a greater Soviet response. Besides the threat of wider international military involvement, there are domestic implications for Thailand as well. At this point, Prime Minister Kriangsak seems to have a fairly secure hold on power and the support of the Thai Army and its Commander, General Prem. A major Thai military reverse, however, could embolden Kriangsak's civilian and military critics. In particular, they might try to topple the government by exploiting such issues as the alleged Thai support for Kampuchean resistance forces, especially if such support were regarded as a provocation for a Vietnamese attack. Faced with political downfall, Kriangsak might be prompted to call upon the United States and China to provide military assistance against an external threat and to preserve his government. Likely principals in a new Thai Government would probably not alter internal policies significantly, but a successor to the current Prime Minister would be freer to begin seeking an accommodation with Vietnam. 

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The continuing massive influx of refugees, which the Vietnamese offensive will certainly aggravate, could alone have serious consequences for Kriangsak. The Thai Government and international aid

*\*State/INR believes it important to state that currently there are no indications that Vietnam is planning a major attack on Thailand.*

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agencies are already struggling to aid the nearly three quarters of a million Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. Although Thailand's present humanitarian policy of admitting refugees has public support, the refugee issue has aroused domestic opposition in the past, particularly when it appeared that Thailand was being forced to assume too much of the burden. The area of Vietnamese operations harbors large numbers of refugees. Some quarter million are estimated encamped in Kampuchea within 75 kilometers of the border town of Poipet alone, and the Vietnamese might decide that the more it can push out of the country, the easier its job of pacification will be. The Thai fear that there may be as many as a million more potential refugees in western Kampuchea. If the refugee situation deteriorates and the international community, particularly the United States, does not respond promptly with increased assistance and cooperation, Kriangsak's political opponents would have a readymade issue to exploit. [REDACTED]

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The pressures outlined above are beyond the capabilities of the Thai to control adequately on their own. Should fighting spread across the border in a major way, the Thai will face an array of military and political issues that could force them to seek outside assistance, first from the United States, but also from China. If the Thai should believe that sufficient support is not forthcoming from either quarter, they might find it necessary to seek some accommodation with Vietnam.

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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

4 December 1979

THAI-KAMPUCHEAN BORDER

ALERT MEMORANDUM

A combination of factors could lead to rapid deterioration of the situation along the Thai-Kampuchean border. This in turn could jeopardize the political stability of Thailand. Specifically, a planned Vietnamese military offensive could cause hundreds of thousands more Kampucheans in the border area to flee to Thailand. Moreover, fighting may spill into Thailand as Vietnamese troops seek to seal the border and destroy anti-Vietnamese resistance forces. Thailand would expect immediate US assistance in coping with either eventuality and might invoke the terms of the Manila Pact in reaction to a perceived threat.  25X1

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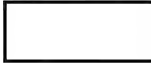


A massive influx of refugees could also have serious consequences for the Kriangsak government. The Thai Government and international aid agencies are already struggling to aid the more than one-half million Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. Although Thailand's present humanitarian policy of admitting refugees has broad public support, the refugee issue has aroused domestic opposition in the past, particularly when it appeared that Thailand was being forced to assume too much of the burden. The area of Vietnamese operations harbors large numbers of refugees. Some half million are reported encamped within 7<sup>5</sup> kilometers of the border town of Poipet alone, and the Vietnamese might decide that the more it can push out of the country, the easier its job of pacification will be. If the refugee situation deteriorates and the international community--particularly the US--does not respond promptly with increased assistance and cooperation, Kriangsak's political opponents would have a ready-made issue to exploit.

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Taken singly, the Thai could probably handle each of these problems. If the government in Bangkok is forced to face them simultaneously, however, there is a good chance it could be overwhelmed--particularly if it concludes that US support is inadequate.

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FOOTNOTE FOR ALERT MEMORANDA

12-pitch (card 2880)

*\*The Alert Memorandum is an interagency publication issued by the Director of Central Intelligence on behalf of the Intelligence Community. Its purpose is to ensure that senior policymakers are aware of the serious implications for US interests of impending potential developments. It is not a prediction that these developments will occur. This memorandum has been coordinated at the working level by CIA, DIA, NSA, and State/INR.*

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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

6 December 1979

ALERT MEMORANDUM\*THAI-KAMPUCHEAN BORDER

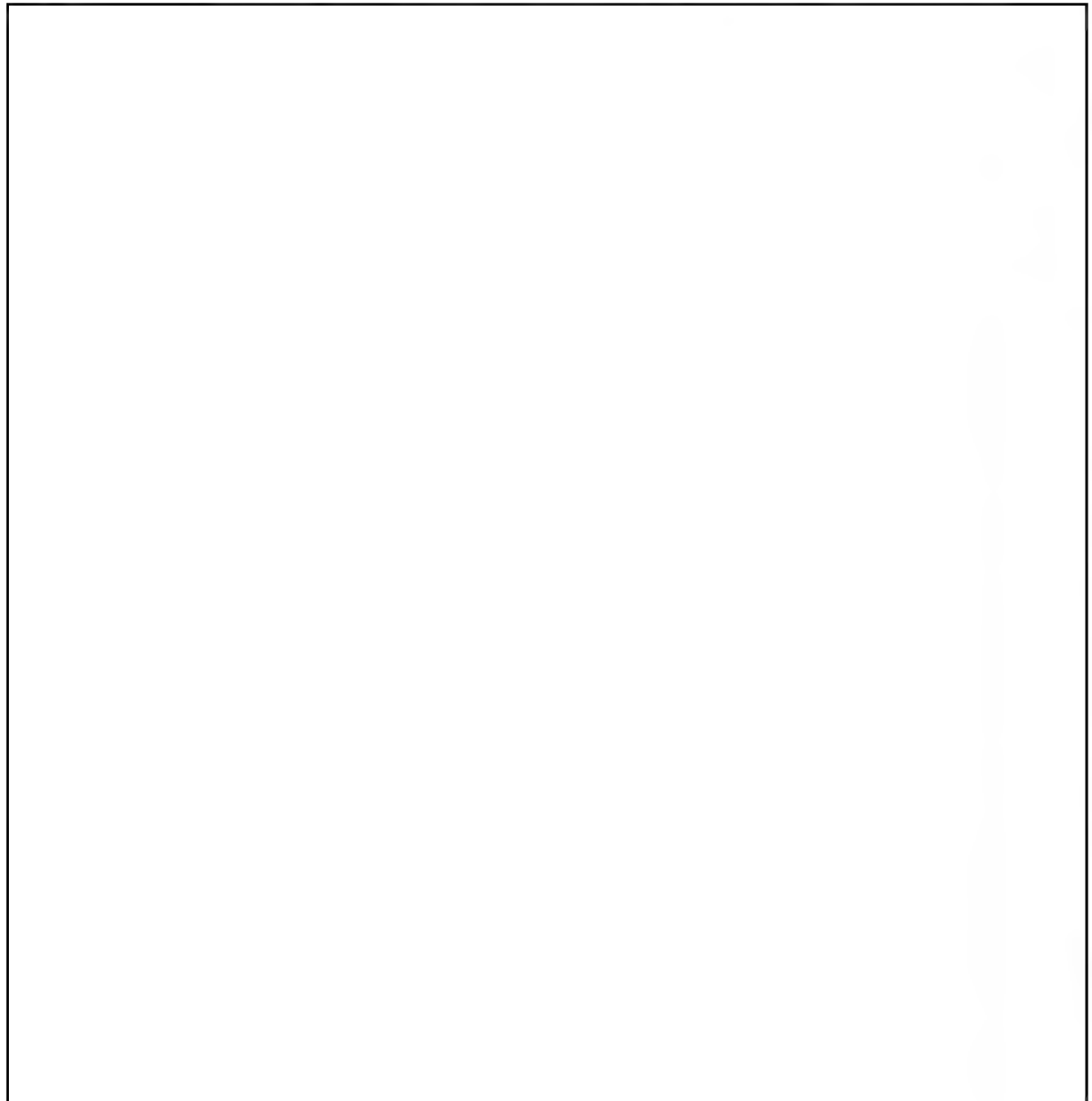
*A combination of factors could lead to rapid deterioration of the situation along the Thai-Kampuchean border. When Vietnam exerts even greater military pressure against the anti-Vietnamese resistance in Kampuchea-* [REDACTED] 25X1

*[REDACTED] fighting could occur across the Thai-Kampuchean border to such an extent that the Thai armed forces would be unable to cope. In addition, the government could be faced with an intolerable refugee burden and increased political criticism, possibly leading to a reversal of Thai policy toward Vietnam. Should the Thais see their security imperiled by Vietnamese military operations, they would doubtless appeal for US aid, possibly under the terms of the Manila Pact. Thailand would probably also seek Chinese support.* [REDACTED]

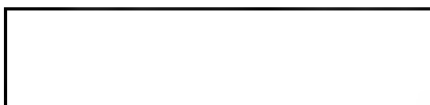
[REDACTED]

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If, by accident or design, a significant engagement occurred between Thai and Vietnamese forces, and the former did not acquit themselves well, the situation would take on an even graver character. We cannot foresee



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how events would unfold, and what the major players would do. A major Thai defeat, however, could constitute sufficient reason for China to teach <sup>THE</sup> Vietnamese a second lesson. Besides the threat of wider international military involvement, there are domestic implications for Thailand as well. At this point, Prime Minister Kriangsak seems to have a fairly secure hold on power and to enjoy the confidence of Defense Minister and Thai Army Commander General Prem [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] A major Thai military reverse, however, could embolden Kriangsak's civilian and military critics. In particular, they might try to topple the government by exploiting such issues as the alleged Thai support for Kampuchean resistance forces, especially if such support were regarded as a provocation for a Vietnamese attack. Faced

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[REDACTED] Likely principals in a new Thai Government would probably not alter internal policies significantly, but a successor to the current Prime Minister would be freer to begin seeking an accommodation with Vietnam. The long-term political consequences of such a shift may present a serious challenge to the credibility of military government. [REDACTED]

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The continuing massive influx of refugees, which the Vietnamese offensive will certainly aggravate, could alone have serious consequences for Kriangsak. The Thai Government and international aid agencies are

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already struggling to aid the more than one-half million Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. Although Thailand's present humanitarian policy of admitting refugees has public support, the refugee issue has aroused domestic opposition in the past, particularly when it appeared that Thailand was being forced to assume too much of the burden. The area of Vietnamese operations harbors large numbers of refugees. Some quarter million are reported encamped in Kampuchea within 75 kilometers of the border town of Poipet alone, and the Vietnamese might decide that the more it can push out of the country, the easier its job of pacification will be. The Thais fear that there may be as many as a million more potential refugees in western Kampuchea. If the refugee situation deteriorates and the international community, particularly the United States, does not respond promptly with increased assistance and cooperation, Kriangsak's political opponents would have a readymade issue to exploit. [ ]

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The pressures outlined above are beyond the capabilities of the Thais to control adequately on their own. Should fighting spread across the border in a major way--and bring with it a host of ancillary problems--the Thais will face an array of military and political issues that could force them to seek outside assistance, first from the United States, but also from China. If the Thais should believe that sufficient support is not forthcoming from either quarter, they might find it necessary to acquiesce to Vietnamese control of Kampuchea. [ ]

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Procedures For Preparing An Alert Memorandum

GENERAL:

- The appropriate NIO is responsible for the substance of Alert Memoranda.
  - PPG is responsible for the mechanics of production and dissemination.
  - OCO will assist in the process wherever possible, but cannot take responsibility for the substance of the memoranda.
1. When it is decided that an Alert Memorandum will be produced, the NIO will:
- Notify OCO Senior Operations Officer  STAT  
and C/PPG or DC/PPG  STAT
  - Prepare an Alert Memorandum distribution filling in the appropriate office designation on Pages 2, 3, & 4. A sample distribution is attached.
  - Notify his colleagues throughout the Community that a draft memorandum will be disseminated for coordination.
  - Notify his corresponding NITO that a collection paragraph will be required.
  - Prepare a rough draft.
2. NIO/W will notify the members of the Warning Working Group.
3. The NIO will deliver the rough draft to PPG, C/Text Preparation Branch (7G30). PPG will put the memorandum on cards and return the first draft as expeditiously as possible to the NIO. The NIO will then disseminate by LDX for coordination. Copies should go to DD/CT and the appropriate NITO.
4. When coordination is complete, and the collection paragraph is in hand, the NIO will deliver this draft with changes to PPG. It should include a footnote stating the extent of coordination. He will include in this package a covering memorandum for the DCI's signature transmitting the document to the NSC. PPG will then prepare the memorandum in final to go forward.



5. The NIO will then successively clear the memorandum in final with:

- The NIO for Warning
- D/NFAC
- DDCI
- DCI for signature

6. The NIO for Warning can be omitted when the matter is urgent. The DDCI can sign for the DCI if the DCI is not likely to be accessible in the near future.

7. It is essential that the NIO or a substantive officer designated by him remain on duty until the DCI has signed off on a memorandum and his questions and changes have been accommodated. This responsibility cannot be left to the Senior Operations Officer.

8. The finished memorandum along with any changes made in the course of clearance will then be returned to PPG for final typing and reproduction. When the matter is urgent, or when the process is completed after normal duty hours, the Senior Operations Officer will make an initial dissemination by LDX. He should also provide a copy to DD/CT and the NITO. Hard copy dissemination will be made by the first scheduled courier run, although dissemination by special courier may on occasion be desirable.

Attachment

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